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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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FRENCH GENERAL FORESEES VIET MINH BRIDGEHEAD IN THAILAND

General de Linares, French commander in Tonkin, believes the Viet Minh may bypass French defenses on the Plaine des Jarres and move toward the Mekong River, perhaps to attack Luang Prabang. He believes an assault on Vientiane is less likely.

The general speculates that the enemy may wish to join with Communist elements in Thailand. If this is accomplished, the "roads would open in all directions" for an ultimate Communist advance against all Southeast Asia.

De Linares is gravely concerned over the problem of air supply from the Tonkin delta to Laos. The problem of Viet Minh guerrilla efforts in the Tonkin delta itself is less serious, although it can be expected to become greater.

Comment: The American Embassy in Bangkok states that Thai officials are also seriously concerned over the Viet Minh offensive and think it may be a prelude to a deep thrust into Southeast Asia. The Embassy feels that, after seizure of Laos and the establishment of a puppet government there, the Viet Minh may use the same strategy in Cambodia, thus splitting Southeast Asia in two. It believes also that there may in the future be a linkup between a "Free Laos" government and the Peiping-sponsored Thai autonomous state in southern Yunnan.

At present, it seems likely that the Viet Minh will confine its current campaign to northern Laos and leave further objectives for a future campaign, possibly in October.

State Department review completed

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